

## PCC/OPCC Update Bulletin - Response to Coronavirus/COVID-19

**A message from Mark** – First and foremost I hope that you are all well and keeping as safe and positive as possible during these unprecedented times.

Rather than my normal monthly newsletter, I will now be looking to send you a weekly briefing so you can stay up to date with the work through my office and key information on the coronavirus effort and I hope you will find it useful.



You will have seen the police have new emergency powers to help support the Public Health and Government “Stay at Home, Protect The NHS, Save Lives” guidance.

I am working closely with the Chief Constable, West Yorkshire Police and our partners to ensure these key aims are followed on daily basis in keeping our communities safe. I am also now joining a weekly conference call with other PCCs across England and Wales with the Home Office/Policing Minister to ensure key issues are discussed and raised directly that are affecting policing and community safety more generally during the pandemic.

Policing is by consent in the UK and this can only be done with the public’s support. Essentially it is about every single one of us, working together to ensure we are supporting our officers, staff, volunteers, and crucially our NHS and care workers which will literally save lives.

I’m sure that many of you, like me, last week and last night joined the “clap for our NHS and carers” events which were truly uplifting and heartening things to be a part of. It’s a message I will continue to support along with all our key workers, especially police officers, staff and volunteers.

As PCC I want to remain accessible and listen to your views on policing and community safety. You can contact me in a variety of ways including visiting <https://www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/contact-us>. You can also ask me for further information on items within this bulletin.

I know that all of our individual circumstances are different, juggling work, family commitments and mental health/welfare issues in these unique times that we now all find ourselves in, but I want to finish by saying that we are all in this together, and we’ll get through it together...stay safe.

Best wishes

Mark Burns-Williamson OBE  
West Yorkshire’s Police and Crime Commissioner

**Our dedicated coronavirus webpage**

We've set up a dedicated coronavirus page on our website which contains support information, volunteering opportunities, links to further help and support and much more. You can view it here <https://www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/coronavirus>



## Wellbeing, Health and Get Involved

### NHS approved wellbeing lists

Please see some links to NHS and Public Health England approved wellbeing information

- [8 Ways to Stay Happy, Healthy & Blissfully Busy Through the Lockdown](#)
- [7 Ways to Stay Busy and Positive as the Lockdown Continues](#)
- [21 Ways to Keep the Kids Entertained While The Schools Are Closed](#)
- [How to Look After Your Mental Health During the Lockdown](#)

### Send us your artwork on social media

If you have young ones and you fancy giving them some artwork to do we're looking for pictures showing support to key workers or raising awareness of the stay home message.

Post them on social media and copy us in (@WestYorksOPCC) and we'll look to share them.



However, work is underway to introduce and explore more Video Enabled Justice, which will allow all those involved in a case, including Victims and Witnesses, to provide their testimony remotely using a system such as Skype.

Similarly, suspects being held at police stations whilst investigations are ongoing, are being provided with telephone access to their legal representatives, which complies with legislation. Other visitors to Police Custody areas such as appropriate adults and interpreters, are subject to a triage process which will minimise risk and ensure that such visits are only made in person when there are no other options available, and it is safe to do so. None of these measures should interfere with a suspects rights, as stipulated in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

Police, The Courts and the Crown Prosecution Service have dial-in meetings daily to progress all criminal justice issues and updates are provided regularly to my office so that appropriate support and guidance can be provided to me as Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board.

In the meantime, all victims and witness will be notified of changes to cases they are involved in by the West Yorkshire Witness care Unit. This team is fully functional, and are able to work from home to keep everyone informed. Whilst there is no impact on their resourcing at this time, they do have a huge amount of work to do, so the advice is, please be patient. They may make contact via email or text, so please ask anyone affected to keep a lookout for messages coming through.

Many other service providers are hoping to continue a good part of their business online, accepting that they cannot meet customers and clients face to face. One such organisation is The Together Women Project, (TWP), who have had to close the doors to their centres in Leeds and Bradford, but are planning to continue engagement virtually. Women's Therapy Leeds are also now doing a telephone counselling service for existing clients.

Probation and the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) have also had to close their offices to comply with the Government Guidelines, however they are still meeting with clients where absolutely necessary and making all other engagements are via virtual means.

### **Victims**

Victim's services are still available across the county. Whilst in the majority of cases their offices have had to close they are all still available over the phone or other online options. To find out more about contacting victims services visit my coronavirus webpage <https://www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/coronavirus>

I am also urging everyone to get involved with the Ministry of Justice's consultation on a new Victims Code.

The Code of Practice for Victims of Crime (the Victims' Code) is a statutory Government document which sets out the minimum level of services that victims of crime should receive from criminal justice agencies and other organisations in England and Wales.

I would urge everyone, from victims themselves, police officers and staff, services providers and members of the public to get involved and have their say. I want to see a Code that works for everyone, something we are able to champion to help all victims have the same level of service and care.

To complete the consultation visit <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/victim-policy/consultation-on-improving-the-victims-code>

### West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) update

The VRU is still committed to working across the county to tackle and prevent violent crime. The Unit is working closely with a number of partner agencies including the NHS, police, local authorities, prisons and probation to develop a sustainable and long-term approach to ensuring our communities are safe and feel safe. This week the Unit has submitted their Response Strategy and Needs Assessment to the Home Office which details their approach to tackling serious violence across West Yorkshire which remains a priority.

### Our latest coronavirus statements

See links below to our recent statements on the coronavirus/COVID-19.

- **Public warned to be on their guard against scammers looking to exploit the COVID-19 Pandemic** (released 27<sup>th</sup> March) - <https://www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/news-events/news/public-warned-be-their-guard-against-scammers-looking-exploit-covid-19-pandemic>
- **Police Continuing to Keep The Public Safe as New Powers are Introduced** (released 26<sup>th</sup> March) <https://www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/news-events/news/police-continuing-keep-public-safe-new-powers-are-introduced>
- **Police and Crime Commissioner says #ThankYouNHS and thank you to all our key workers** (released 24<sup>th</sup> March) – <https://www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/news-events/news/police-and-crime-commissioner-says-thankyounhs-and-thank-you-all-our-key-workers>
- **Police reassure public amid coronavirus pandemic** (released 19<sup>th</sup> March) – <https://www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/news-events/news/police-reassure-public-amid-coronavirus-pandemic>
- **Contacting the PCC – Coronavirus/COVID-19 Update** (released 18<sup>th</sup> March) - <https://www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/news-events/news/contacting-pcc-coronavirus-covid-19-update>



### The Coronavirus Bill

The Coronavirus Act 2020 (<https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2019-21/coronavirus.html>) became law on Thursday 26th March 2020. A summary of the police powers associated with the can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/police-given-new-powers-and-support-to-respond-to-coronavirus>

Answers to frequently asked questions on the Act can be found on Ask The Police's website, visit <https://www.askthe.police.uk/content/@284.htm>

Further information on the Act can be found on PNLD's website, visit <https://www.pnld.co.uk/covid-19>

### Contacting the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Along with the office I am now working remotely and following the advice. This means that face to face meetings at the office and elsewhere will not be taking place and we are not able to deal with correspondence posted through our letter box, either in person or by Royal Mail.

However, you can still get in touch by email [contact@westyorkshire.pcc.pnn.gov.uk](mailto:contact@westyorkshire.pcc.pnn.gov.uk) and telephone 01924 294000 in the usual manner.